Christian Reprehension

OF

Confusion, Ranterism, Cruelty, and Opposition to *Spiritual Order* and *Christian Liberty*,

In Brief Reflections.

First, On a conceited Pamphlet, untruly Stiled, *Spiritual Order and Christian Liberty proved Consistent in the Churches of Christ, and Impositions upon the Consciences of Believers*, &c. *found Antichristian and Destructive thereto*; Signed *R. G.*

Secondly, On a *Brief History of the Rise, Growth, Reign, Supports, and suddain fatal foil of* Popery; *and Description of Six Popish Pillars*; By a hidden Author.

By Lovers of Truth and Peace, *G. W.* & *S. C.*

Psalm 10. *vers.* 8,9. *He sitteth in the Lurking-Places of the Villages, in the Secret Places doth he Murder the Innocent; his Eyes are privily set against the Poor: He lieth in wait secretly as a Lyon in his Den*, &c.

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A *Chriſtian Reprehenſion* of Confuſion, Ranteriſm, Cruelty, and Oppoſition to *Spiritual Order* and *Chriſtian Liberty*, &c.

WHerein the Author of this Treatiſe has ſeemed to plead *for Spiritual Order and Chriſtian Liberty, as conſiſtent in the Churches of Chriſt, and againſt Impoſitions on the Conſciences of Believers in Religious Practices, without inward Convincement or Clearneſs to act therein*; and for *the Principle of Immediate Inward Revelation of Light and Spirit*, &c. and againſt *the Roman Church-Popes, &c. uſurping Eccleſiaſtical Juriſdiction and Power unto an implicit and blind Obedience, Tyrannouſly uſurping and exerciſing Government over the Conſciences of Believers or Diſciples*, &c. And yet that both *Spiritual Order & Chriſtian Liberty were eſtabliſhed by the Apoſtles in the firſt Churches*, pag. 5. and for *Church-Government, which is Spiritual*, pag. 9. *And that it reſts in the Power of any one perticular Church to make Orders, for the better governing of the Church, ſo as in the Exerciſe of Church-Government the Rules of Expedieney, Peace and Charity be obſerved*, page 10. *And that Spiritual Government and Chriſtian Liberty are not only conſiſtent, and accordingly practiſed in the firſt Churches, but alſo neceſſary for preſerving Spiritual Unity and Peace of the Churches from Confuſion and Tyranny, all things being decently and in order, in Charity, and to Edification*, pag. 6.

With many more paſſages, which in themſelves being general Truths, we ſhould have let paſs the ſaid Treatiſe or Pamphlet without taking this notice of it, if the Author had not perverted and contradicted the ſame Truths by ſome perticular corrupt paſſages and perverſe Reflections, and putting forth a ſting of Envy and Bitterneſs in the Tail or Poſtſcript of his Pamphlet againſt the *Quakers* eſpecially, and tauntingly, and enviouſly telling of being *alarmed with the loud Clamour of Church-Government, Laws, Orders of general and perticular Meetings of the Friends of the Miniſtry and others, the neceſſity of one or more in the Church having Power infallibly to determine all matters Controverted therein, to whom all muſt ſubmit, though unconvinced or unclear in themſelves, or elſe be*

branded with the odious Names of Schismatick, &c. p. 2. By all which it appears the man's wholly ignorant of the Intent, Use and Service of those general and particular Meetings of our Friends, which he scornfully and enviously smites at. He falsly Clamours herein, for they have no Church-Government, Laws or Orders now to set up, being long since established by the Lord's Power and Council; nor do they meet to determine all Controversies in them, having no Controversie either in Doctrine or Discipline to determine, the Lord having fully satisfied them in those things by his Light and Spirit; nor yet to impose any matters upon any of their Society unconvinced or unclear therein; But for the help and comfort of one another in the love of God, and Unity of his blessed Spirit, in all things proper to such Meetings, which are not for Controversie, nor to set up men over the Churches of Christ, but for the help and comfort of one another in the Lord, who is our Law-giver, from whom true Wisdom and Counsel comes, whose Presence and Power attends those our Meetings, and is livingly felt in them; and therefore we value not what Envy and Scorn can say against them in this or any other perverse Gain-sayers, Apostates or others.

We being willing to search what are those *Impositions on Believers Consciences*? What those *Church-Orders, Laws, outward Appointments, Instructions, New Papacy*, &c. which he complains of and derides, as impos'd without inward convincement among the people called *Quakers*, at whom he Smites? Whether evil or unlawful in themselves, or altogether unnecessary? We would know what particular order or outward appointments &c. they are, all his Clamour is against? upon the search we find them mentioned, and (as he conceits) strongly argued against, page 7. 8. thus, viz.

The contradiction between this kind of Imposition and Immediate Revelation of the Light and Spirit of God in every Individual as his unerring Rule, &c. is in this, that this inward Revelation is asserted, as being of it self sufficient, if obeyed, to lead into all Truth, without any necessity of hearkening unto any outward Writings or Instructions whatsoever; but as this Light leads thereunto, which if it be so, that a Society be united upon that Principle, the uselesness of general or particular outward Laws, and Instructions, and of the fore-appointed standing Meetings Weekly, Monthly and Quarterly, and the frequenting the Set-Time and Places of those Meetings, further than it becomes necessary to every individual Person of that Society through the Immediate Revelation in his own

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particular then received, is so very Manifest, that indeed it is a deserting the Case of Immediate Revelation, and an Acknowledgement of the Insufficiency of that Light within, &c.

This is such an Argument and Oppositon as we have scarce ever seen before, that because the Light within, and Immediate Revelation is sufficient to lead into all Truth, therefore all outward Writings and Instructions whatsoever, for appointed standing Meetings, Weekly, Monthly, *&c.* and frequenting them at set-times and places, are all useless to them of the same Communion; we deny the Consequence.

First, because the Light of Christ within hath directed, ordered and setled such a Method and Order for these our Religions Meetings, at Set-Times and Places, to be known, open and free, both to them that are in Christian Society with us, and others who are seeking after the Truth; and not to leave them in uncertainties, as to Time and Place, when the Method is already setled as to both, in God's Wisdom by his Light and Spirit, according to the primitive Christians Practice, who profest and knew the same Light and Spirit of Inward and Immediate Revelation as we profess.

Secondly, When the Lord has taught us our duty, and order of our Christian Meetings and Society, for us to persevere in, we have our Law & Order therein Established by our great Law-giver, which to decline and reject, in pretence of leaving every one to an Immediate Revelation, when and where to meet, or to run up and down the Countries to gather every particular Meeting; this, were to tempt the Lord, and to slight his Law and Order already given and established among us, under pretence of expecting a New Revelation for every Meeting, both as to time and place; and what intolerable cumber and trouble would this create?

Thirdly, How, or where can this Gain-sayer prove, that ever the Primitive Christians, who knew Immediate Revelation and Light within, did keep their publick Meetings, either for Worship, Order or Discipline, without any fore-appointment, of set-time or places? If they did not, then the said argument and consequence reflects on them as well as on us.

Fourthly, To suppose the sufficiency of inward Revelation to make all Writings or Instructions whatsoever useless, is to render all Gospel-Preaching and Instructions by Immediate Revelation useless.

leſs and unneceſſary, whether it be to the Church or others: And therefore this Writer, *R. G.* his arguing thus falaciouſly, to diſſolve our Chriſtian Meetings from their ſettlement as to Times and Places, and to make the Goſpel Miniſtry therein void; this is meerly idle, looſe and licentious, only ſuiting the Irreligious, the Careleſs, the looſe *Ranters* and ſlaviſh *Temporizers*, who dare not ſtand nor appear for Truth in perſecuting times; and what then is become of his *Spiritual Order* he pleads for? We can't but obſerve the Man's Confuſion and Contradiction, whileſt ſometimes he pleads for Believers to be *in the ſame mind and Judgment*, to obſerve the Scriptures, *and the Spiritual Order and Chriſtian Liberty* Eſtabliſhed by the Appoſtles; and confeſſeth *that indeed Uniformity in a Chriſtian Society is much to be deſired*, page 3. 5. Yet in contradiction to all this, he pleads for ſuch a Latitude as that *in ſeveral diſtinct Fellowſhips, and differing in outward Practices, they ought to continue as one in the Lord*, Page 1. *And for Church-Unity, no Schiſm in the Body, Chriſtians to be of one mind in the Lord, Unity in Spirit, not in an Uniformity of outward Practices*, Page 4. And yet that *indeed Uniformity in a Chriſtian ſociety is much to be deſired*: Thus confuſed and contradictory ſaying and unſaying this Agent appears; and while he contends ſo much for Charity, Love and Unity of Spirit, &c. in diſtinct outward Practices, ſeveral diſtinct Fellowſhips, &c. He miſerably diſſembles and plays the Hippocrite, whilſt he is enviouſly ſmiting againſt the Chriſtian Society of the People called *Quakers*, becauſe they differ from him, and cannot allow themſelves ſuch a Liberty as his looſe arguing (like the *Ranters*) tends to, going on like them, telling of *what ever outward diſpenſation of Light God hath once gloriouſly appeared in; the Life of God in every outward Adminiſtration, is one and the ſame Adminiſtration, being but the outward Garment that he chuſeth and refuſeth at his pleaſure, gathering his People out of various Adminiſtrations into himſelf, who is Love, however diſtinguiſhed from one another, who therefore cannot be tyed to any one Form*, Page. 14. But pray where doth he prove that either the diſpenſation of Light, wherein God Gloriouſly appeareth, or the outward Adminiſtration wherein his Life is, in the Goſpel diſpenſation, is refuſed, or the Form of Godlineſs rejected by the Lord, or his People in the Goſpel Diſpenſation? This Perſon's Work againſt us ſtill tends to *Ranteriſm*, under pretence of *Love and Union*, not diſtinguiſhing between the Adminiſtration

niſtration of the Law, and the Diſpenſation of the Goſpel; and tho' he does ſo greatly pretend to *Love and Union of the whole* Iſrael *of God, walking under various outward Practices, becauſe of differing Apprehenſions*, yet he is ſo far from either Love or Chriſtian Charity, that he ſhews neither towards the People called *Quakers*, whom in his Poſtſcript he bitterly Reproaches, telling of the *Builders of* Babylon, *this Beaſt deſcribed*, Rev. 13. *among the Quakers, comparing them to Sect Mrs Form-Builders, Proud and Self-Righteous* Phariſees *of this People*, &c. Thus the Serpent's ſting and venom appears in the Tail of his Work; thus he has vented his confuſion and envy, like a Babel Builder, againſt the Innocent whom the Lord ſtands by; one while he is for Order, Government, Form and Uniformity in a Chriſtian Society; another while he is againſt it and them, who are ſtedfaſt in that Chriſtian Order and Form the Lord has gathered them into, and his Preſence and Power ſupports them therein, who are neither for making Rents, Schiſms, nor Sect-Maſters, but teſtifie againſt them, in the Name of their Lord and Maſter Chriſt Jeſus. And though this falſe Accuſer has oppoſed the Impoſition of Laws and Orders upon Chriſtians Conſciences, without inward Convincement, yet he appears very defective and Partial, in that he has not given Teſtimony againſt making Oppoſition and Parties againſt ſuch Order and Church-Government, as is agreed upon by a Chriſtian Society in the Truth; for it's ſuch oppoſition, cauſing Diviſions and Seperations, which *We*, as a Chriſtian Society can in no ways own, nor Countenance, but Teſtifie againſt in whomſoever that profeſſing the ſame Divine Light and Truth and Immediate Revelation as we do. And the Lord Rebuke all our envious Oppoſers.

After this ſecret Smiter has thus diſſorderly argued againſt Order, he gives us this falſe and ſcornful Wipe, viz. *This little Nim Erected Popery*, Page 8. but no Demonſtration, nor Manifeſt Proof thereof againſt us, other than what himſelf hath granted and aſſented to; nor has he proved the People (whom he chiefly Smites at) juſtly chargable with Popery, or *Raiſing old Arguments out of the Rubbiſh of Popery to defend it.* But thus Smits blindfold in the dark; for we raiſe no Arguments, but what are warrantable by the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Teſtament.

I Having lately ſeen a Pamphlet, called, *A Hiſtory of the Riſe, Growth, Reign, Supports and ſuddain fatal foil of Popery, with a Deſcription of its Six Pillars:* I looked for the Hiſtoriographer's Name, but find that concealed in Darkneſs, he being conſcious to himſelf it would not abide the Light and that if his Name had been expoſed, then his Folly and Raſhneſs would have reflected upon his Perſon: So he has left us to the old Rule, to know the Tree by the Fruits.

The firſt thing he ſeems to reflect upon is Railing Accuſations, which in Words he highly explodes, and ſays, *Its the duty of* Chriſtians *to perform all Offices of Good to their Country, with utmoſt Charity, &c.* So that we might expect a mighty ſober and charitable account of things from this Man by his beginning; but alas, the Man had not writ much before the Venom of his Spirit appears againſt all ſorts of People differing from his own Sentiments, and lays about him like a Fury, calling one ſort of People *pernicious to Church and State*; Another ſort *Paganiſh, damnable Hereticks, void of Conſcience.* And in pag. 11. ſpeaks his mind out at once, viz. *That its the Magiſtrates duty to puniſh all ſorts of Diſſenters, from the old Councils and Canons with the ſame Puniſhment with which they puniſh Murderers and Adulterers, and not at all to tolerate them.*

By this time we ſee what is the ground of his Anger, that makes him buſle thus, the *Anabaptiſts, Presbyterians, Independents* and *Quakers* are not hanged a days for being ſuch; as Murderers are; but what ſort of Man this is, may eaſily be gueſt at, and upon Inquiry, we ſhall find him a Stone in the Building of the ſixth Pillar of *Popery*, viz. a *Popiſh Church-man*, retaining in him ſome of the worſt Dregs of *Popery*, viz. Cruel Perſecutions unto Death; for all ſuch as he is pleaſed to brand with *Hereſie* or *Schiſm*, which all *Proteſtants* look upon as the avowed Principle of *Papiſts*; and ſo it ſeems it is his: And it was he, or ſuch Church-men as he is, that were the Cauſe of ſuch Cruelties and Barbarities upon accounnt of Religion here in *England* from the Years 1680. to 1686. In which they ſet the Informers a work to Ruin many Hundred good Families in this Kingdom,

Kingdom, and filled the Goals with fourteen or fifteen Hundred Innocent Priſoners, who ſuffered under their Cruelties as Trophies of the great Power and Rule that the *Popiſh* Church-men had in thoſe days; I ſay, *Popiſh* Church-men, for the real or moderate Church-men do generally excuſe themſelves of that work, as much as they can, and do deny Perſecution for Conſcience-ſake to be any Principle of their Church, and do lay the Fault upon ſuch bloody Hunters and Drivers as this Hiſtory-man, who while they ſeemed to be Members of the Church of *England*, by their Cruelty and Feircneſs againſt *Diſſenters*, brought this Ignominy upon their Church, and put an oppertunity into the Hand of a *Popiſh King*; when he came to eaſe the heavy Burdens which they had ſo Cruelly laid on, and to put a ſtop to the Ruinous Practices of the wicked Informers (which they had made the Pillars and Supporters of their Church) as a *Great Father* of their Church being told, what a ſhame the Informers were to his Church, ſaid, *That a Ship could not be built without ſome crooked Wood*; implying the Ravenous Informers as neceſſary to the uphold, or building the Church, as crooked Wood to building a Ship) and thereby to Ingratiate himſelf in the Hearts of the greateſt part of the Kingdom, by the eaſe he gave them, either from their Sufferings, as *Diſſenters*, or from the Slavery and Drudgery they lay under, as Officers in their reſpective Places, being all at the Call and Command of thoſe wicked Varlets, to Ruin their honeſt Neighbour, how, when, and where they pleaſed to Require them.

Now after they had, I ſay, provided ſuch a Means for the *Popiſh King* to Ingratiate himſelf, and if poſſible, to ſweeten the Minds of his Subjects into a better Opinion of him and his Government, then they had conceived; he took hold of the oppertunity given, and in a good meaſure emptied the Goals, ſtopt the Informers Trade; cauſed ſome to be puniſhed for their notorious Perjury; others fled for it; and then he put out a Declaration, to ſtop ſuch Cruel Proceedings, till Remedy might be found for all People to have a legal right to Worſhip God, as they were perſwaded was moſt acceptable to him, as of right they ought.

But when theſe poor *Diſſenters* were thus delivered by a *Popiſh King*, from their *Proteſtant Fetters*, then thoſe (pretended) *Proteſtant Perſecuters* grew exceeding angry, both with him, and with the *Diſſenters* that he had ſet at Liberty; and

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fain would they be at the Old Trade again if they could: But becauſe their Horns are ſhortned for goring that way, now they are trying other ways to bring miſchief upon us; and becauſe he thinks the beſt way in theſe Times to bring Suffering upon us, is to ſet us forth as *Supporters of Popery*, and thinks thereby to raiſe up a *Proteſtant* Zeal againſt us; for it may be he thinks others as much void of Senſe, and as much ſubject to Blood & Enmity as himſelf; for they muſt be very ſilly that will be kindled by his falacious way of Argument into bitterneſs againſt us: For Example; He affirms the poor *Quaker* to be one of the *Pillars of Popery*; but when we go to ſeek for demonſtration; why, they addreſt *King James*: Ay, but what did they ſay? They returned their Grateful Acknowledgements for the Eaſe and Freedom they Enjoyed, from their Cruel Perſecutions the *Popiſh* part of the *Church of England* had laid upon them; and humbly deſired he would go on to eaſe them from the Grievances and Oppreſſions that ſtill lay upon their tender Conſciences.

Now let all Rational Men judge, whether this hath any the leaſt ſavour of ſupporting *Popery*; might not as much have been ſaid to the *Grand Senior*, if he had been Regnent here, without any juſt cauſe to impute *Turkiſm* to them? And doth not this bold daring Man at the ſame time, ſpit his Venom againſt all the *Gentlemen*, pertaining to the ſeveral *Inns of Court*, and againſt moſt of the *Grand-Jury-Men*, and *Corporations*, among whom I know there be *better Proteſtants* than he is: but who is ſo bold as *blind Buyard*? And how much cauſe hath this man to Rage againſt us after this furious rate, to tell the World we are a *Pillar of Popery*, *Paganiſh*, *Men without any Conſcience*, *damnable Hereticks*, &c. pag. 22, 23. But in the Concluſion of that Paragraph, (through forgetfulneſs, or ſome other ill Accident) the man pulls down all this fiery Pile about his own Ears, and tells us, That theſe *Quakers* would not Vote for the New Members in *London*, for fear they might be Inſtrumental to bring in *King James* again.

Can any Man that is in his Sences, think this *Hiſtory-maker* was in his, when he blundred out this *Nonſence*; which if put together reads thus, The *Quakers* are one of the Pillars of *Popery*, for they would not Vote for the New Members, for fear they ſhould bring in *King James* again; and it is even as good *Logick* to ſay, the *Quakers* are a Pillar of *Popery*, for they thankfully acknowledged

a Popiſh King's kindneſs, for delivering them from Cruel *Proteſtants*, *Popiſh Perſecution.*

But after all this, methinks I find more cauſe to ſuſpect this *Hiſtoriographer* to be himſelf really Guilty of what he would faſten upon others, namely *ſupporting* and *upholding Popery*; for he is one that would in a hidden, ſly way *Advance Popery*; for he gives it ſuch Magnitude in his Hiſtory (which he tranſmits to futer Ages) as I believe the moſt Arrogant *Jeſuite* in *France* would not have dared to do; For (*mark*) he hath preſented very near all the People of *England*, ſave a piece of the *Church of England*, to be in the Intereſt of *upholding* and *ſupporting Popery*; for if *Anabaptiſts*, *Presbyterians*, *Quakers*, *Independants*, and *part of the Church of England*, be all concerned, (as he ſaid) how doth he think a piece of the *Church* ſhould grapple with the other piece; and all the other Intereſts beſides? So that it ſeems to me as if his buſineſs or task were (whoever ſet him to work) to ſhew the People of this and other Nations, the *Popiſh Intereſt* in a Multiplying-Glaſs; That if they will not love, yet they may at leaſt fear it; and to make the *Proteſtant Intereſt* very diminitive: This is not like one that wrote in *King James's* days, that there were not Papiſts enough in *England* to make all the *Coal-Fires* in *London* at once. But if this Hiſtory-man be to be credited, the *Popiſh Intereſt* muſt be looked upon very formidable ſtill, for Five of his Six Pillars are ſtill what they were; and four of them are more firmly ſettled than they were then; by the Act of King and Parliament for eaſe of tender Conſciences, by which it appears the Government and Wiſdom of the Kingdom did not ſee with this man's Eyes; they did not think it the beſt way to hang people for diſſenting (in ſome points of *faith* or *worſhip*) every Circuit and Aſſizes, as Murderers commonly are ſerved. And truly it is hard for a man of his *evil temper* to retain ſo much *venom* in himſelf, but he muſt vent it againſt ſome body; and I perceive the Government ſhould have a ſhare of it if he durſt; but *curſt Cows have ſhort Horns*: He reflects what he durſt upon the Magiſtrate, page 11. for not doing their duty, namely in not *hanging up all* that diſſent from any of the *Canons* of the firſt *ſix*, or at leaſt four *general Councils*, as they do *murderers*. But if this man would come into the Light, we might ſee him; I am perſwaded it would be

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eaſie to prove him a *diſſenter* from ſeveral of the *Canons* of thoſe very *Councils*; but I would not have him hanged for it, but live and learn to be *wiſer*, and *honeſter*, and to repent him of his Raſhneſs, and learn to love his Neighbours, and not thus *Cain*-like, to grudge the Rain and Sun-ſhine to men of better Principles than himſelf, and perhaps (when we know him) they will out-do him in Practice and Converſation alſo. However, I mean to leave him at preſent, with the Exhortation of an Unerring Teacher, *Whatſoever you would that Men ſhould do unto you, do ye unto them*; and then he will write no more Books, to procure his Neighbours to be hanged for Conſcience-ſake, till he is willing to be Hanged himſelf upon the ſame ſcore.

THE END.